

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6267

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCPAC HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 8698

LIMDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR AT OPENING OF BUSINESS DECEMBER 27

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJ: AFGHAN-PAKISTAN RELATIONS -

SPECIAL PAKISTANI EMISSARY

SUMMARY: DEPFONMIN WAHID ABDULLAH TOLD ME DECEMBER 26 OF VISIT TO KABUL BY BHUTTO'S COUSIN, MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO, MAYBE AS EARLY AS DECEMBER 27, OSTENSIBLY TO DELIVER INVITATION TO ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. ABDULLAH EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE ANGER AT LACK OF ADEQUATE DIPLOMATIC PREPARATION FOR VISIT. SUGGESTED INFORMALLY THAT AMBASSADOR BYROADE MIGHT WISH CONVEY THOUGHT TO BHUTTO THAT IF THIS VISIT INTENDED AS MEANS OF OPENING DIALOGUE WITH GOA, ABSENCE OF NECESSARY PREPARATION COULD ONLY RESULT IN WORSENING OF AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS.

1. DURING CALL DECEMBER 26 ON DEPFONMIN WAHID ABDULLAH WHICH

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COVERED A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS, HE DESCRIBED CURIOUS SEQUENCE

OF EVENTS WHICH HE OBVIOUSLY VIEWED AS ALMOST INSULTING TO AFGHAN PRIDE AND HARDLY CONDUCIVE TO IMPROVING AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS.

2. ACCORDING TO ABDULLAH, PAK COUNSELOR BABAR TELEPHONED SUBORDINATE OFFICER OF FONMIN DECEMBER 24 TO "INFORM" LATTER OF IMPENDING VISIT TO KABUL OF PRIMIN BHUTTO'S COUSIN, MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO, TO DELIVER INVITATION FOR UPCOMING ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (NOW SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY). ASSUMING THIS MERELY COVER FOR VISIT BY SPECIAL PAK EMISSARY TO DISCUSS GENERAL STATE OF AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS, ABDULLAH INSTRUCTED HIS STAFF TO AWAIT MORE DETAILS BEFORE RESPONDING. BABUR THEN TELEPHONED ON DEC 25 TO DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS FOR PAKISTAN/SOUTH ASIA (GHAFAR) WITH SIMILAR MESSAGE. LATTER RESPONDED, ON INSTRUCTION, THAT SINCE AFGHANISTAN IS MEMBER OF STEERING COMMITTEE FOR ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, NO INVITATION REQUIRED. IF M.A. BHUTTO COMING TO DISCUSS PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS IN GENERAL, RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENT BY BHUTTO AND GOP INTERIOR MINISTER KAYUM HAD CREATED HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE. IN ABSENCE OF CAREFUL DIPLOMATIC PREPARATION, GHAFAR TOLD BABAR THAT M.A. BHUTTO VISIT LIKELY TO WORSEN RATHER THAN IMPROVE SITUATION.

3. FORNMIN LEARNED MORNING OF DECEMBER 26 THAT M.A. BHUTTO BOOKED ON PIA FLIGHT TO KABUL THAT DATE, BUT APPARENTLY MISSED PLANE IN PESHAWAR. LOGICAL SUPPOSITION IS HE MAY ARRIVE ON PIA DECEMBER 27.

4. ABDULLAH INFORMALLY SUGGESTED THAT I ASK AMBASSADOR BYROADE, AS FRIEND OF BOTH PARTIES, TO TRY DISSUADE BHUTTO FROM SENDING HIS COUSIN AT THIS TIME ON SUCH A MISSION. I REPLIED THAT I DOUBTED AMBASSADOR BYROADE WOULD BE ABLE CHANGE BHUTTO'S DECISION IF ALREADY MADE. DCM INQUIRED WHETHER GOA WOULD RECEIVE EMISSARY IF HE ARRIVED. ABDULLAH REPLIED "OF COURSE WE WOULD HAVE TO RECEIVE HIM".

5. COMMENT: OBVIOUS THAT OFF-HAND, ALMOST DELIBERATELY CASUAL WAY IN WHICH GOP HAS HANDLED THIS MATTER IS VIEWED HERE AS CONDESCENDING AND PERHAPS DELIBERATELY PROVOCATIVE. ABDULLAH REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO FACT THAT "WE KNOW BHUTTO'S TRICKS", AND "WE HAVE TACTICS OF OUR OWN". WE OF COURSE HAVE ONLY ABDULLAH'S SIDE OF THE STORY, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND LEAVE IT ENTIRELY TO AMBASSADOR BYROADE WHETHER HE THINKS IT WISE FOR HIM TO ENTER THIS JOUST. BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR HERE THAT AN M.A. BHUTTO VISIT TOMORROW OR SOON THEREAFTER ONLY LIKELY TO EXACERBATE ALREADY TENSE RELATIONS.

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